

# “Friends of Rathbun Lake”



How to Convey Information to Your Community

# “Friends of Rathbun Lake” Meeting

- Started in 2000
- “Friends of the Lake Meeting” is an annual event (not an organization)
- Facilitate communications
- Has evolved from a formal meeting into an informal social gathering

# Purpose of “Friends of Rathbun Lake” Meeting

## **Facilitate communications between**

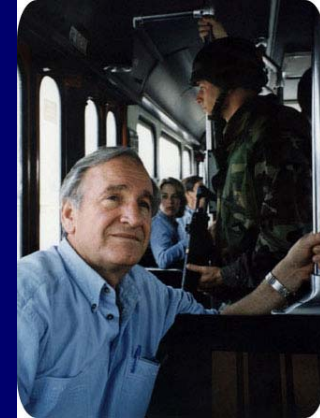
- Corps and federal, state and local governments
- Corps and stakeholders
- Corps and congressional staff
- Congressional staff and stakeholders
- Different congressional staffs

# How Did We Get Started

- Multi-step process
- Develop individual relationships
  - Congressional staff
  - Stakeholders
  - State senators and representatives
- Identify participants for meeting
- Plan event

# Congressional Connection

- Senator Grassley-R
- Senator Harkin-D
- Congressman Leach-R
- Congressman Boswell-D



Know How They Fit In the Big Picture

# Senator Chuck Grassley (R)

- US Senator Since 1980
- Only working family farmer in Senate
- **Chairman of Finance Committee**
- Ag Committee
- Judiciary Committee
- Budget Committee
- Co-sponsor S-728 WRDA
- Visits all 99 counties each year



# Senator Tom Harkin (D)



- US Senator since 1984
- Prior - US House for 10 years
- Navy Pilot
- Ranking D Ed Appropriations
- Ranking D Subcommittee for Agriculture, Nutrition, Forestry
- Author 1990 A.D.A.
- Energy and Water Appropriations
- Co-sponsor S 728 WRDA
- Defense Appropriations



# Congressman Jim Leach (R)



- US Congress since 1976 (2<sup>nd</sup> District)
- Committee on International Relations (East Asia/Pacific)
- Chairman Emeritus Financial Services
- Understands the Corps



# Congressman Leonard Boswell (D)



- Retired Army Lt. COL
- Iowa Senate 1984 –1996
- US Congress since 1996 (3<sup>rd</sup> District)
- Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
- Transportation/Infrastructure Subcommittee
- Terrorism/Homeland Security Subcommittee

# Rules for Making Congressional Contact

- Operations Managers may initiate contact with congressional staff in your state
- OMs may not make direct contact with DC staff (unless the DC staff initiates the contact)
- OMs may not lobby for funds or assistance but may provide information
- Report all congressional contacts to Operations Division chief (Kansas City District Policy)

# How to Contact Congressional Staff

- Contact congressional staff office in your state at:
  - <http://www.senate.gov/>
  - <http://www.house.gov/>

# Congressional Staff

- Invite assigned staff person to the lake
- Brief on operations of the project
- Tour facilities
- Discuss upcoming “Friends Meeting”
- Follow-up

# Stakeholders

- Definition:
  - Organizations
  - Individuals
  - State agencies
  - Other federal agencies
  - Elected officials that have a vested interest in your project

# Stakeholders are Derived From Our Authorized Purposes

- At Rathbun Lake:
  - Recreation
  - Fish and wildlife resources
  - Water supply
  - Flood damage reduction
  - Water quality releases
  - Navigation supplementation



# Identified Rathbun Lake Stakeholders

- NRCS
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa State University
- R C & D (USDA)
- Rathbun Land and Water Alliance
- Rathbun Regional Water Association
- USGS
- Rathbun Snow Riders
- Rathbun Bird Club
- Trail riders
- Rathbun Yacht Club
- Chambers of Commerce
- On-lake businesses
- Area tourism businesses
- Iowa Department of Tourism
- Governor's staff
- 6 soil & water conservation districts
- Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
- Farm Bureau
- Economic development orgs.
- Cities
- County supervisors
- Rathbun Lake Association
- Destination Resort Park Steering Committee
- Rathbun Lighthouse Society
- Campers
- Fishermen
- Boaters
- Hunters
- Birdwatchers

# Involve Your Stakeholders

- Meet with groups
- Meet with leadership
- Identify common goals and objectives
- Communicate importance in overall operation of the project
- Look for ways to partner/synergize
- Establish points of contact
- Discuss upcoming “Friends Meeting”

# State Senators and Representatives

- Identify contact information from state website
- Invite state senators and representative(s) for a lake tour/briefing
- Discuss upcoming “Friends Meeting”

# Invitation List

- Congressional staffers (Start here)
- State representatives, senators
- County government officials
- Governor's staff
- State agency directors as appropriate
- Utilities
- Lake association
- Chambers of Commerce
- Leaders of organizations with current projects
- Corps of Engineers

# Establish Meeting Location

- Fish hatchery
- Conference facility
- Restaurant
- Marina
- Houseboat

# Follow a Format

- Attendees give brief update
- Allow for questions
- Allow for socializing

Follow-up is critical



# Outcomes of “Friends” Meeting

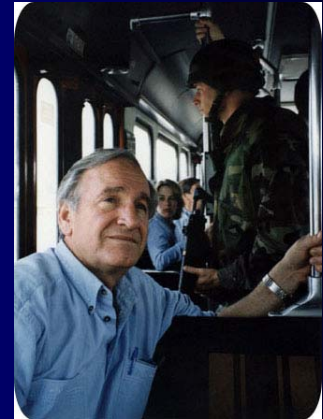
- Stakeholders - meet the congressional staff
- Congressional staff - hear lake issues first hand from the stakeholders
- Congressional staff - gain understanding of the diverse functions and needs of the project and its stakeholders
- State and local officials - explain impacts of a federal lake on their area
- Special projects - receive attention

# Support for Project Activities

- Operation and maintenance
- Recreation improvement projects
  - Recreation facility modernization
  - Honey Creek Resort State Park
  - Rathbun Lake Lighthouse Visitors Center
- Environmental projects
  - Section 1135 Program (4 projects)
  - Section 206 Program

# Excellent Congressional Support

- Senator Grassley
- Senator Harkin
- Congressman Leach
- Congressman Boswell



For more information and  
insight on this topic, contact:

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Rathbun Lake